

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 02831 01 OF 02 201544Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----103133 201544Z /43

O 201534Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3338

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02831

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN MEETING WITH SITHOLE

1. SITHOLE AND OWEN MET FOR TWO HOURS MONDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 20. DR. GOPO JOINED SITHOLE; PALLISER AND GRAHAM ATTENDED; AND SEITZ SAT IN FOR THE EMBASSY.

2. OWEN BRIEFED SITHOLE ON THE RECENT MALTA TALKS WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HE DESCRIBED THE DISCUSSIONS AS SERIOUS, BUT SAID A WIDE GAP REMAINED BETWEEN THE PARTIE HE ASSURED SITHOLE THAT NO DEALS HAD BEEN STRUCK IN MALTA, AND THAT HE HAD NOT "GIVEN AN INCH" ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. MOREOVER, OWEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 02831 01 OF 02 201544Z

SAID, HE HAD REPEATEDLY RESISTED EFFORTS BY THE FRONT AND IN THE UNITED NATIONS TO HAVE HIM CONDEMN THE INTERNAL TALKS.

3. RESPONDING TO OWEN'S REQUEST FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATUS OF THE TALKS IN SALISBURY, SITHOLE SAID THAT THE MEETINGS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THE NATIONALISTS

ARE NOW DEALING WITH A NEW SMITH. SMITH'S NEW COMMITMENT TO ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE IS WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THESE TALKS FROM ALL THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS. SMITH HAS CONCEDED MAJORITY RULE AND NOW SIMPLY WANTS TO GET THE BEST TERMS HE CAN. SITHOLE THEN READ FROM THE TEXT OF THE ADDRESS HE HAD PLANNED TO DELIVER AT THE OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN TRIPOLI. THE LAST PART OF THE SPEECH IS A VERBATIM TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES AND THE FUNCTIONS OF THE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. IN THE ENSUING CONVERSATION OWEN, PALLISER, AND GRAHAM MADE VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGREEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY STRESSED THAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD CLEARLY PROHIBIT WHITE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE FROM HELPING TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. THEY ALSO ADVISED THAT WHITE MEMBERS NOT BE PERMITTED TO VOTE ON CONFIDENCE QUESTIONS. OWEN EMPHASIZED THAT A DATE FOR ELECTIONS SHOULD BE SET AND THAT INDEPENDENCE SHOULD BE AGREED FOR SOME TIME IN 1978. WITHOUT THIS ACCELERATED PROCESS, HE SAID, GREAT DOUBT WOULD BE CAST ON SMITH'S SINCERITY.

4. SITHOLE SAID THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WOULD BE LED BY AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL COMPOSED OF HIMSELF, MUZOREWA, CHIRAU, AND SMITH WITH A NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN NOMINATED BY THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTED BY THE CROWN. UNDER THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, CABINET MINISTERS WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 02831 01 OF 02 201544Z

APPOINTED WITH HALF THE PORTFOLIOS GOING TO BLACKS AND HALF TO WHITES. OWEN POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HMG TO APPOINT A CHAIRMAN UNLESS THE ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN CLEARLY ACCEPTED BY THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE WOULD ALSO BE A CRUCIAL TEST FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE THEREFORE URGED SITHOLE THAT THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS IN THE CABINET REFLECT THE SAME PROPORTION BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE AS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER KEY TEST WOULD BE WHO CONTROLS SECURITY DURING THE TRANSITION AND THAT IF THIS RESPONSIBILITY FELL TO SMITH OR ONE OF HIS COLLEAGUES, THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE UNDERMINED. OWEN FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT THE EARLY DEPARTURE OF SMITH FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, BUT IN RESPONSE TO SITHOLE'S CONCERN, ADMITTED THAT SMITH'S PRESENCE WOULD HELP SELL THE AGREEMENT TO THE WHITE POPULATION.

5. SITHOLE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR OWEN'S ADVICE AND SAID THAT HE, HIS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MANY OF THE GUERRILLAS IN THE BUSH RECOGNIZED THE SAME PITFALLS.

IF THE TRANSFER DOES NOT APPEAR GENUINE, THE NATIONALISTS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 02831 02 OF 02 201542Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----103127 201544Z /43

O 201534Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3339

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 02831

EXDIS

WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME PERSUADING THE GUERRILLAS TO AC-
CEPT IT, LET ALONE INTERNATIONAL OPINION. HE SAID HE
WAS NEVERTHELESS CONFIDENT THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE
FIGHTERS WOULD BE PREPARED TO RETURN TO RHODESIA AND
EITHER RE-ENTER CIVILIAN LIFE OR BECOME INTEGRATED INTO
A NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY.

6. OWEN THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF HOW TO DEAL WITH
THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HE REITERATED THAT NO SINGLE PARTY
SHOULD HOLD A VETO IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT, BUT HE SAID
THE STABILITY OF A SETTLEMENT WOULD IN LARGE MEASURE
DEPEND ON THE REACTION OF THE FRONT AND, MORE PARTICULAR-
LY, OF JOSHUA NKOMO. OWEN ASKED FOR SITHOLE'S THOUGHTS
ON HOW NKOMO MIGHT ENTER THE SALISBURY ARRANGEMENTS AND
HOW HE AND HIS ARMY COULD BE NEGOTIATED BACK INTO A
SETTLEMENT. OWEN SAID THAT HE STOOD READY TO HELP. SIT-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 02831 02 OF 02 201542Z

HOLE DID NOT RESPOND WITH ANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS OTHER THAN THE IDEA THAT KAUNDA MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO USE HIS INFLUENCE ON NKOMO. HE SAID HE BORE NO MALICE TOWARDS NKOMO AND RECOGNIZED HIM AS A TRUE NATIONALIST OF CONSIDERABLE STATURE. HE ADMITTED HE DID NOT HOLD SIMILAR SENTIMENTS FOR MUGABE. OWEN ASKED SITHOLE TO GIVE MORE THOUGHT TO HOW NKOMO MIGHT BE OFFERED A WAY INTO THE SETTLEMENT. SITHOLE AGREED THAT HE WOULD DO SO AND ARRANGED TO SEE OWEN AGAIN TOMORROW MORNING.

7. COMMENT: OWEN DID NOT HOLD BACK IN HIS WARNINGS OF THE DANGER AND WEAKNESSES OF AN INTERNAL AGREEMENT, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE OFFERED SITHOLE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR HIS EFFORTS. SITHOLE'S PRESENTATION WAS RESTRAINED BUT NOT DEFENSIVE. GOPO TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER AFTER THE MEETING THAT THEY HAD "HELD THEIR FIRE" ABOUT THE CAUTIOUS REACTION OF THE U.S. AND UK GOVERNMENTS TO THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT, AND WE UNDERSTAND FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT SITHOLE IS DISAPPOINTED HIS ACHIEVEMENT HAS NOT WON A WARMER RECEPTION HERE.

STREATOR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS, DEBRIEFINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON02831
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780077-0546
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780235/aaaabdpd.tel
Line Count: 196
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 171461d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3542693
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: OWEN MEETING WITH SITHOLE
TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH, (OWEN, DAVID), (SITHOLE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/171461d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014